## ORSE Produc-

The demand for horses for farm and city tion Falling work has fallen rapidly since the close of the Fast in U.S. war in 1918. The automobile and auto truck have made the horse-drawn vehicle of rela-

tively little importance in city streets and even on country roads, while the tractor has replaced some of the work stock on a great many farms. With the improvements that are being made in tractors, it is difficult to foresee the extent to which tractors will eventually replace horses on American farms, but it is not likely that the horse will ever be entirely displaced. At least one team

will be necessary on most farms.

The decreased demand for horses in cities and on farms has resulted in a decrease in horse values of more than 35 per cent from 1918 to 1924, with continued low values since. In fact horses were worth relatively less in 1926 than at any other time in the past 60 years. With the sharp drop in demand and the rapid falling off in the values of horses came a startling decrease in the number of horse and mule colts foaled in the past seven years. While the number of horses and mules over 2 years of age decreased about 6 per cent from 1920 to 1925, the number of colts under 2 years of age decreased 51 per cent. The census of 1925 showed 73 colts under 2 years of age per 1,000 horses and mules of all ages, as compared with 132 colts in 1920, or a reduction of 45 per cent in the ratio.

## Reports from Crop Correspondents

Reports from farms of crop correspondents show that 41 horse and mule colts were foaled during 1925 per 1,000 head of all horses and mules on their farms January 1, 1926, as compared with 91 during 1919 per 1,000 head of all horses and mules on farms January 1, 1920. Unless more colts are raised in future years than were raised in 1925, either the number of horses and mules on farms will eventually fall to approximately one-half the present number on farms, or their average life must exceed 15 years.

While this downward trend in colt production continued unabated in the South Central States and the range country, an increase in the number of colts foaled in 1925 over 1924 was shown in the Corn Belt and Northeastern States. Most of the States where surplus mules are produced showed a decline in the birth rate of colts during 1925 as compared with 1924—Missouri showed a decrease from 54 to 46 colts, Kentucky from 40 to 35, Texas from 47 to 36, and Oklahoma from

49 to 45; only Kansas and Nebraska showed an increase.

Without colts and young horses to replace our present number of work animals the number will fall off rapidly during the next few vears. The number of horses and mules on farms since 1910 and the outlook for the next five years is shown in Figure 119. A reduction in the number of work animals on farms of 30 to 40 per cent within the next five years is practically inevitable. This rapid reduction will first develop into an acute shortage in those States where the horses now on farms are the oldest and where there are fewer colts coming on as replacements, and where the topography of the country, the character of labor available, or the type of farming followed make the use of tractors less satisfactory than in other parts of the

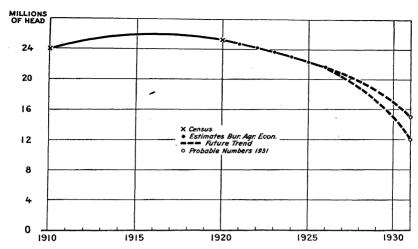


Fig. 119.—Number of horses and mules on farms in 1910 and 1926, and estimated number in 1931

country. Figure 120 shows that on the farms of crop correspondents in February, 1926, there were more horses over 10 years of age in the Northeastern and Southeastern States than elsewhere. The Southeastern States have the largest percentage of mules over 10 years of age.

Replacement Effected in Far West

Neither of these sections raises as many colts as the Middle Western and range States. These are also sections which are not as well adapted to tractor farming as are the broad plains of the Central States. Only in the far Western States are the present number of colts anywhere nearly sufficient for replacement purposes.

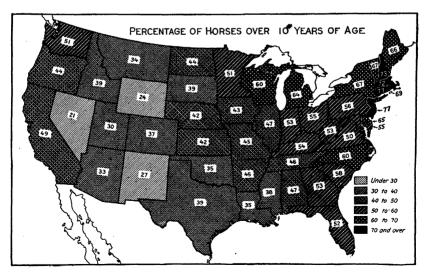


Fig. 120.—There are more horses over 10 years of age in the Northeastern and Southeastern States than elsewhere. Only in the western range States are the present number of colts anywhere nearly sufficient for replacement purposes

The individual farmer should study carefully the type of power best suited to his own farm and plan now for the necessary horse and mule replacements 3 to 10 years hence. Present low prices for horses may be expected not to continue indefinitely. The average value of horses on farms has not changed much for the past three years although the average age has increased considerably.

Communities

OSPITALS for What farm family would not welcome the Agricultural assurance that in case of serious injury or sickness an ambulance would appear on call at their home and take the patient to a near-by

public hospital for treatment; that superior medical and surgical skill, including that of their own family physician, and aided by modern medical appliances would be at their command; that sympathetic trained nurses, drawn from the home community, would care for them; that friends and family could make daily visits to the patient?

This is becoming a reality as public hospitals, long considered a necessity by city people, are being erected in rural communities with

financial assistance of farmers themselves.

A recent rural hospital survey by the Department of Agriculture 7 has revealed a growing movement in the establishment of such public

hospitals and has disclosed a variety of types.

Twenty States have recently enacted legislation facilitating the erection by taxation of hospitals by rural counties. Establishment is by the regular county legislative body usually after popular vote, the law generally specifying a maximum tax rate of 2 mills on the dollar, which in practice is often much less.

Cost figures run from \$30,000 to \$250,000. Maintenance expenses are met largely from the hospital receipts; deficits, if any, from taxes. Government is through a board appointed by the county governing

body or elected by the people.

Jefferson County, Iowa, population 16,440, erected a \$43,000 25-bed hospital at Fairfield in 1912 (fig. 121) and later a nurses' home which cost \$15,000. Bonds voted by people, \$27,000; cash donations for building, \$7,982; equipment donations, \$8,000. Hospital earnings, 1923, \$20,776.68; expenses, \$24,666.96; deficit, \$3.890.28. Average 11year deficit, \$3,289.74. Number of patients in 1923, 746; one-half farm people. Receipts from county taxes, \$7,726.60. Tax rate, 1 mill, which was one thirty-seventh of the total county tax. Country patients are conveyed in the hospital ambulance.

McPherson County, Kans., population 21,845, built by popular vote through taxation, a modern 50-bed hospital plant costing \$250,-000, which, in 1924, had 828 patients. It maintains a training school

for nurses and 18 additional employees.

## A Successful County Hospital

A variation of the type is the County Home Hospital at Urbana, The county built a public hospital adjacent to the county infirmary which has proved very successful. It more than maintains

<sup>7</sup> NASON, WAYNE C. RURAL HOSPITALS. Farmers' Bul. No. 1485, 48 pp., illus., 1926.